



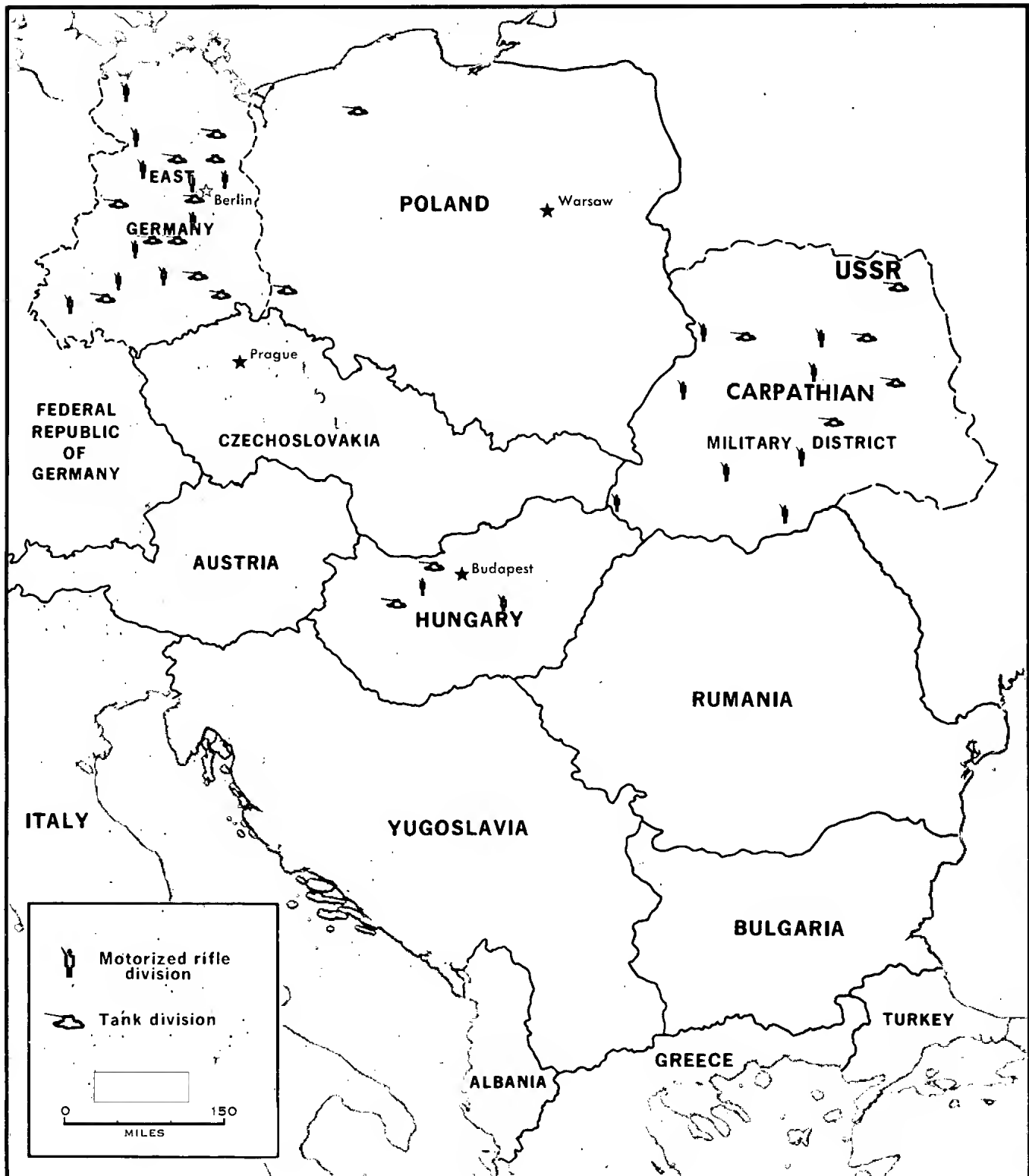
The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 10 May 1968



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SOVIET DIVISIONS NEAR CZECHOSLOVAKIA



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
10 MAY 1968

1. Czechoslovakia

We cannot confirm the reports of Soviet troop movements along the Polish-Czechoslovak border. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] In addition, several Western diplomats traveling outside the Polish capital on 8 and 9 May were stopped by security officers--an unusual practice in Poland.

There is tentative evidence [REDACTED] that two Soviet armies in East Germany were placed on a high state of alert [REDACTED], but there have been no indications that troops from these units have begun to move. East German party officials in an area near the Czech border, however, reported [REDACTED] that the population was connecting the unusual presence of Soviet troops in the frontier area with developments in Czechoslovakia.

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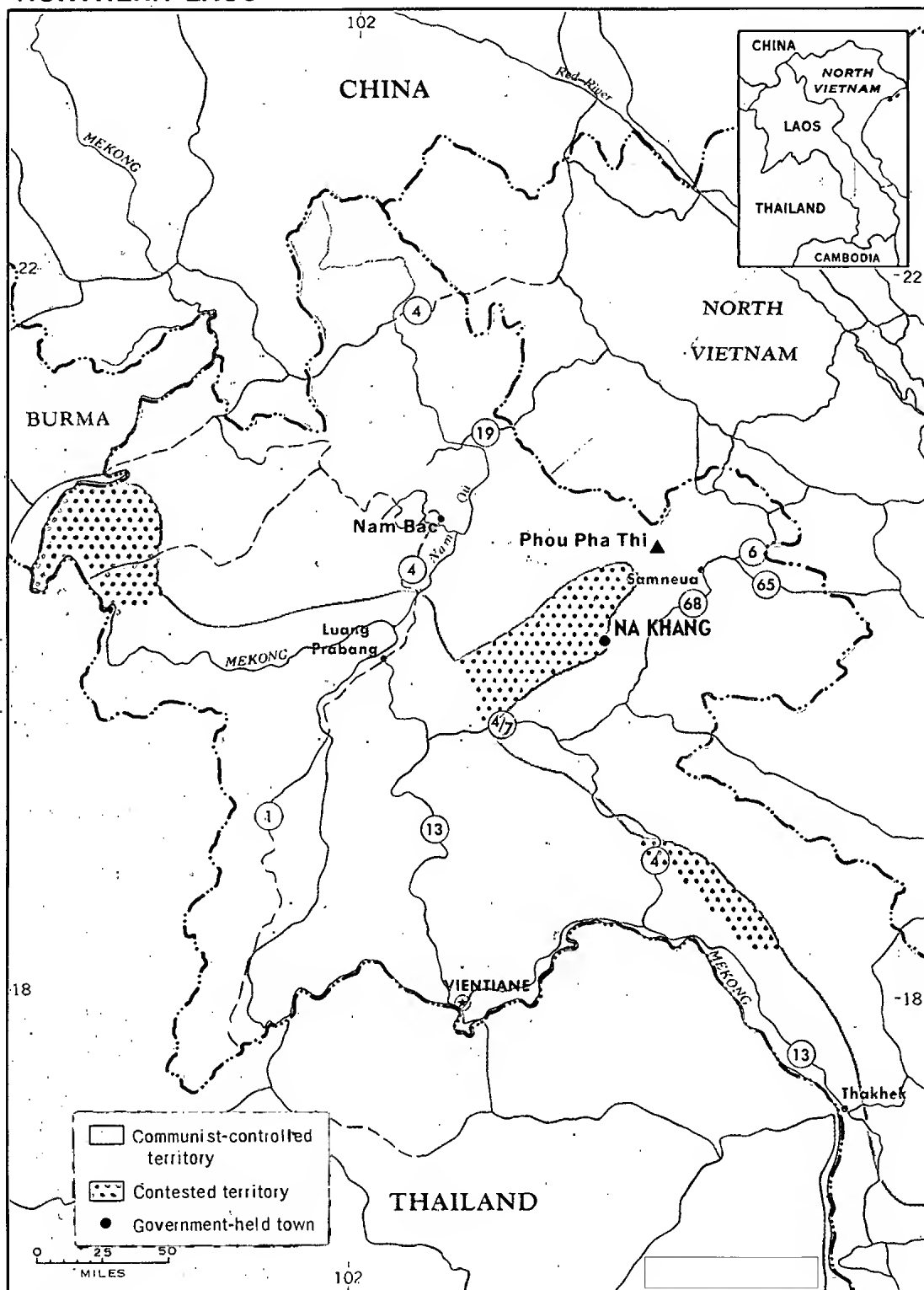
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So far it appears that the Soviets may be thinking of a show of force designed to pull the Czechoslovaks back toward orthodoxy. The Soviets probably would not intervene outright without a call for help from some segment of the Czechoslovak party. [REDACTED]

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NORTHERN LAOS

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2. South Vietnam

A Communist intent to sustain the current offensive continues

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We believe this would again take the form of widespread mortar and rocket barrages combined with ground attacks on selected targets.

3. Laos

Nha Khang (Site 36), the government's last remaining guerrilla base of importance in the northeast, is under severe Communist threat. Outlying defensive positions several miles to the east were overrun two days ago. Mortar fire has hit Nha Khang itself, and Communist troops are probing toward the airstrip--the base's lifeline. This was the pattern before the fall of Phou Pha Thi and Nam Bac earlier this year.

Government troops at Nha Khang, recently reinforced, now total over 2,000. Communist strength is not known but includes elements of North Vietnam's 316th Division, which has been active in the Communists' dry season offensive.

Any all-out Communist attack would be likely to come within the next three weeks, before the heavy rains begin.

4. Philippines

President Marcos has agreed in principle to further cuts in the Philippine military engineer contingent in Vietnam. The present force of 1,810 men is to be drawn down gradually until a level of 1,400 is reached. Marcos is still working hard to get a congressional appropriation for the smaller force, but it is uncertain whether this can be accomplished before congress' regular session ends in mid-May. There may have to be a special session called for next month.

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5. North Korea

The Washington readout of the BLACK SHIELD mission over North Korea on 6 May

Military targets observed showed no important change in Pyongyang's military posture.

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6. Soviet Union -
Brazil

The Brazilians are detaining the Kegostrov, one of the major Soviet space support ships, on grounds that it entered Brazilian waters. Rio's irritation has recently grown over the intrusion of other Soviet ships into its claimed territorial waters. It seems determined to make a thorough investigation of this latest incident.

The Soviets, in attempting to get prompt release of the ship, must consider how hard they can push the issue without undercutting their efforts to build good relations with the Brazilians.

7. Israel

Foreign Minister Eban told Norwegian officials last week that Israel would like postponement of a UN vote on the nonproliferation treaty.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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10 May 1968

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**Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only**

10 May 1968

I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Letter from Ho Chi Minh: On the eve of the opening of the Paris talks, Hanoi has broadcast to South Vietnam a letter from Ho Chi Minh to the head of the Liberation Front. It praises the current fighting of the Viet Cong in the South and urges vigilance in the face of "cunning efforts" by the US, "which is talking peace while actually stepping up the war." In an effort to counter any letdown because of negotiations, the letter urged people in the South to overcome all hardships and sacrifices, and stressed that only by continuous fighting will the US be completely defeated. It also stated that "genuine peace" would come when the US accepted Communist terms.

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Conditions in Hanoi: During a brief stopover in Laos in mid-April, a member of the Canadian ICC mission in Hanoi gave his views on conditions in the North Vietnamese capital to American embassy officials. The Canadian noted that with the bombing restriction, the number of children in Hanoi has nearly tripled. Truck traffic which formerly ran only at night is now running all the time, thus easing some of the traffic congestion in the city. He also observed that the precautions surrounding official functions in Hanoi have been relaxed. Now considerable advance notice is given official receptions, and ranking regime officials appear together more frequently.

The Canadian shares Charles Collingwood's view that Hanoi invited several Americans to North Vietnam in late April because the regime was preparing a diplomatic initiative of its own and was overtaken by President Johnson's speech on 31 March. He offered no additional evidence for this, however, and may have been merely reporting Hanoi rumor.

Like other foreigners in the capital, the Canadian was highly complimentary of Hanoi's air raid warning system, but he noted that the bombing was a source of constant anxiety among the populace.

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Shipping Report: Cargo operations at Haiphong continue at levels considerably above 1967. In April, cargo delivered to North Vietnam by foreign flag ships totaled 152,500 tons, compared with an average of 118,000 tons a month during 1967.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Anti-US Demonstrations: As part of its periodic roundup of activities protesting US involvement in Vietnam, Hanoi included in an international English language broadcast on 8 May remarks made at a May Day rally in New York by Gus Hall, secretary of the

American Communist Party. He was quoted as pledging that the "US revolutionaries" would continue to promote the struggle against "imperialists' wars and against imperialism and capitalism." The same broadcast also listed anti-US demonstrations in Norway, Algeria, and Tanzania.

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